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*This play is dedicated to
Gilbert Medina and Colombe O'Hara.*

Cast of Characters

ED: 36 years old

OLIVIA: 42 years old

JANE: 39 years old

ADELE: 39 years old

TOM: 32 years old

ANDRE: 28 years old

Setting

A bare stage. Perhaps white benches.

Acknowledgements

Five Flights was first produced by Encore Theatre (San Francisco) in 2002, with the following cast:

ED Liam Vincent
ADELE..... Lisa Steindler
TOM Craig Neibaur
OLIVIA Alexis Lezin
JANE Dawn-Elin Fraser
ANDRE..... Kevin Karrick

Stage managerKathryn Clark
Director.....Kent Nicholson
Producers.....James Faerron, Lisa Steindler

Five Flights was first produced in New York City by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and Encore Theatre in 2004, with the following cast:

ED..... Jason Butler Harner
ADELE..... Lisa Steindler
TOMMatthew Montelongo
OLIVIAAlice Ripley
JANE Sara Surrey, Joanna P. Adler
ANDRE..... Kevin Karrick

Production stage managerJana Llynn
Director.....Kent Nicholson
Producers..... James Faerron, Susan Scannon
Lisa Steindler, and David Van Asselt
Managing Director Sandra Coudert

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Five Flights was initially produced by Encore Theatre (San Francisco) in 2002 and first produced in New York City by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and Encore Theatre in 2004.

FIVE FLIGHTS

by Adam Bock

1. The Narrative.

(ED enters. He is carrying a landscape model. Trees, an aviary, two tiny human figurines to scale. He puts it on a stand, tilted so the audience can see it. Like an aerial shot.)

ED. Here is the landscape of this story. This white building here. Is an aviary. My father built it. It's a birdhouse, but it's the size of a real house, it's a house for birds, for as many birds as you could imagine, he didn't want my mother to be lonely. Not my mother exactly. Her soul really.

He built it to house the soul of my mother.

This is the glass roof he put on it, so she could look up at the sky. These're trees he planted, so she wouldn't miss the seasons as they went by. He planted cherry and then apple, red maple, pine. This is a stream he diverted, so she could watch the water move and so she could remember flying.

All of this was him asking her to stay.

Now. It stands empty. My father's dead. My mother's soul has flown away. The glass in the windows is breaking. Wind. Tree limbs. They don't care. They don't care, they have no reverence for the sorrow that built this place.

(Points to figurines:) This is Olivia. She's my sister Adele's best friend.

(Lights up on OLIVIA.)

And this. This is my brother Bobby's wife. Jane. Look at the shoes.

(Lights up on JANE.)

They're arguing.

(ED exits.)

JANE. He left the aviary to us. To all three of us, actually. Well I mean to the three kids, to Adele and of course to Ed and to Bobby.

Which means in some ways to me. Well. To me, really, also, since what is mine is Bobby's and what is Bobby's is mine.

OLIVIA. He said he doesn't care what happens to it.

JANE. Ed said that?

OLIVIA. No Bobby did.

JANE. Bobby never said that.

OLIVIA. He said he didn't care.

JANE. Oh no Bobby cares.

OLIVIA. That's what he said.

JANE. Why you care what happens to it?

OLIVIA. I'm helping Adele. Decide. What to do.

JANE. Adele should decide for herself.

OLIVIA. She asked me. As a friend. To help her.

JANE. The will said "Three agreeing would be best. But two can decide." Three being Adele and Ed and Bobby. Not Adele and Ed and Bobby and Olivia.

OLIVIA. Or Jane.

JANE. Two being Bobby and Adele. Or Bobby and Ed.

OLIVIA. Or Adele and Ed. Since Bobby doesn't care.

JANE. Oh. Bobby cares. A lot.

OLIVIA. He told Adele "Take it." "I don't want the old thing." "I hate that place." "I hate the smell."

JANE. Bobby loved his mother. He loves this place.

OLIVIA. Bobby doesn't love this place. Adele told me he said "Take it. Take it!"

JANE. When did he say this?

OLIVIA. Adele said "He was so loud." "Take it!" she said he said.

JANE. When did he supposedly say this?

OLIVIA. After the funeral. When they were alone. In the dining room.

JANE. He was upset.

OLIVIA. Of course he was upset. But Jane. That doesn't mean he was lying.

JANE. That was the wrong time to talk to him. He was upset. She shouldn't have been talking to him about things like that at a time like that.

OLIVIA. It sounds like that's what Bobby wants.

JANE. No.

OLIVIA. Doesn't it?

JANE. That's not what Bobby wants.

OLIVIA. That's not what you want.

JANE. Ok.

(Long pause.)

Because what I want.

(Long pause.)

Is what Bobby wants.

(Pause.)

Too.

(Long pause.)

That's how we work.

(Pause.)

Bobby thinks we should sell it.

OLIVIA. You want to sell it?

JANE. It's worth a lot of money. Someone should build something reasonable out here. Houses or. Condos or. Something useful. Something new. Something clean. Something clean someone new could use.

OLIVIA. I want to build out here.

JANE. This land would be perfect for a house.

OLIVIA. I want to rebuild out here.

JANE. It's so close to town, but with air and trees. It's attractive. People are attracted to this spot.

OLIVIA. This is a holy place.

JANE. Someone could work magic out here.

OLIVIA. This isn't a place to develop. This is a place that already is.

JANE. Olivia. It's an old aviary. It's crumbling. Look at the paint. Look at the broken glass. The wood is splitting. It's covered in bird-shit. It's unsafe. The birds are all gone. The plants are all dead. It's done.

OLIVIA. It's not done.

JANE. It is.

OLIVIA. It's not done

JANE. It's old.

OLIVIA. It's tired. It needs care.

JANE. It's not holy.

OLIVIA. It's still awake.

JANE. Its back is broken. It's done.

OLIVIA. Your heart is broken that's what's broken.

(Pause.)

Adele's father loved this place. So he got old. So he let some of it fall down. So. We shouldn't tear the rest of it down. We should push it back up.

JANE. I'm not interested in your holy-roller stuff.

OLIVIA. That's where the pulpit going to be.

JANE. Oh. Is that what Adele wants?

OLIVIA. No. That's what I want. Adele wants it over there. People will sit here. On pleasant days, on benches, under the trees. The birds will come back. We'll need a parking lot.

JANE. A parking lot?

OLIVIA. Big enough for our church.

JANE. Your church for the birds.

OLIVIA. You'd have house and house and house

JANE. No. I'd have one nice new house.

OLIVIA. And house and car and house and house

JANE. Maybe two. Something clean.

OLIVIA. I want. A church that would soar. For the glory of.

JANE. It's ridiculous. A waste. Of space. And of listening.

OLIVIA. Ridiculous is thinking the spirit doesn't matter. Jane.

JANE. Oh the spirit matters. Olivia. But I'm quite sure that what you're describing would

ED. (*Enters:*) It's beautiful out here.

JANE. It is, isn't it Ed.

ED. Be pretty to live out here.

JANE. Wouldn't it though.

ED. Still. Be a shame if it got packed with houses.

OLIVIA. Wouldn't it. Though.

ED. It's hard to figure out what to do.

OLIVIA. I've had some thoughts.

JANE. I've had some thoughts too.

OLIVIA. What we might be able to do.

JANE. With the land.

OLIVIA. And the aviary.

ED. I guess it's something Adele and Bobby and I'll just have to figure out, hm.

(Pause.)

I think we should keep it.

(Long pause.)

OLIVIA. That sounds good.

ED. Keep the land. Let the old place crumble, just sort of fade away. Shall we go?

(OLIVIA and JANE exit.)

Ok. Here we are. Different place. New moment. Same story. Adele! Come here and help me with this.

(ADELE enters. She helps ED with a banner. It is on five-foot poles. It's awkward.)

I made it too big.

(Unfurls the banner. It reads: The Church of the Fifth Day.)

ADELE. You think?

ED. It's way too big.

ADELE. No it's good.

ED. You don't think it's too big? It's gaudy huh.

ADELE. It's not gaudy.

ED. Gaudy's good Adele.

ADELE. Oh then It's gaudy!

ED. You like it?

ADELE. I do!

ED. You really like it?

ADELE. I really do!

ED. I kind of like it too.

ADELE. It's great!

ED. Think it's gaudy enough?

ADELE. Yeah.

ED. Think she'll like it?

ADELE. Yeah.

ED. Really?

ADELE. Oh yeah.

ED. I'm glad you like it.

ADELE. Will you stay?

ED. For what?

ADELE. To help us?

ED. Well. I don't really. Believe all this.

ADELE. You could stay to visit. With me.

ED. Oh well then yeah I'll stay.

ADELE. Good.

(Pause.)

You don't have to tell her. You don't believe.

ED. Have you told her?

ADELE. *(Laughs:)* No. No.

ED. It's too big.

ADELE. No.

ED. I don't think she'll like it.

OLIVIA. *(Enters:)* Like what? That's great. That's great. Did you make that Ed? That's beautiful. That? I love that.

ED. Adele asked me to.

OLIVIA. You did? Adele. That's great. Look how big it is! It's perfect. It'll go right behind me. This is going to be. This is going to be.

Something. Today. Today's the start of something. Really. Really really. Really good. Great. Whole. Large. Holy. I can feel it. Holy.

(Pause.)

I'm a little nervous.

ADELE. Well.

OLIVIA. Of course. That makes sense. *(To ED:)* This is the first time I've ever done this in public. Not practicing. For real.

ED. Well.

OLIVIA. Makes a lot of sense.

That's great. I love that banner. "The Church of the Fifth Day." That says it.

I'm going to get the box. And the brick. The banner and the box and the brick and we're all set.

(She exits.)

(Long pause.)

(ED and ADELE hold the banner.)

ED. She's a little nervous.

(OLIVIA enters with soapbox. In the soapbox are pamphlets and a brick. She puts the pamphlets on the ground, puts the brick on them, and flips the box.)

OLIVIA. I'm nervous but I'm confident. The truth makes you confident. Telling the truth shouldn't be hard. It's a generous act. Right?

ADELE. Right.

OLIVIA. That's right.

(Gets up on the box.)

The first day of the Church of the Fifth Day. Please help me tell the truth.

(Pause.)

And on the Fifth Day he made the creatures of the air!

God made the creatures of the air!

Imagine:

On the fifth day

All of the birds opening their wings for the first time in a great stretch and up and flying up and all of them appearing all and calling each other the first great sound of rapture in the sky floating up through air and over water and up through trees all calling to find brother and lover and family

Imagine:

On the fifth day

The loon laughing that laugh across the water for the first time and imagine his astonishment at the sound and the hummingbird flying up down and then backwards! and up down and into flowers Oh sweet and

Oh and on great wings and small and all and all across the blue blue sky

This is where we live now! they call. This is where we live! This is

(Birds descend and cover OLIVIA. She disappears from sight: wrens, pigeons, ducks, parrots and, perhaps, hawks. We see wings and the flash of eyes and beaks. Then, all at once, they lift and fly off.)

ADELE. Oh.

ED. Oh. Olivia. Are you all right. Is she all right? That was.

OLIVIA. That. Was.

ADELE. That was.

OLIVIA. That was something. Hey! That was something!

ADELE. Something!

OLIVIA. *(Laughs:)* Whoa!

(Laughs.)

I saw him. Inside all of that. I saw him and he was smiling. He. Was. Smiling.

ADELE. Hey!

OLIVIA. We're on track. That was really it!

ED. Of course the rest of that week we went back. To that exact spot. The next day

(ED, ADELE and OLIVIA look up. Thunder.)

it rained.

The day after that

(ED, ADELE and OLIVIA look up. Thunder.)

it rained.

The day after that

(ED, ADELE and OLIVIA look up. Thunder.)

it rained.

The day after that—

(ED, ADELE and OLIVIA look up.)

It looks like rain Olivia.

OLIVIA. I don't think so.

ED. It kind of does.

OLIVIA. You. Come here. Yeah. You.

(TOM enters.)

What's your name?

TOM. Tom.

OLIVIA. Hi Tom. This is Ed. Hold the banner with him. Adele, you come with me.

(TOM takes ADELE's place holding the banner. ADELE and OLIVIA exit.)

(Long pause.)

TOM. I have a bird.

(Long pause.)

(Thunder. Hard rain. They're soaked.)

ED. Oh blast. Blast. This is going to get ruined.

TOM. Quick, come to my place, it's just over here.

ED. Blast this blasted goddamned too-big goddamned banner.

TOM. Just there. Here it is. We can get dry. Come on in.

ED. Thanks.

TOM. Take off your shirt I'll get you a towel.

(ED does. TOM exits. Comes back with a towel and a dry shirt.)

Here.

ED. Thanks. Alot.

(They kiss.)

Then we did what guys do after they get caught in the rain and run into one of their apartments and take off their shirts and kiss.

TOM. *(Showing ED photographs:)* This is my mom and dad. That's me. That's. There. That's my brother. That's. My mom again. And me. That's my dad.

ED. No that's a lie. Actually we just had sex.

No that's a lie. We didn't even kiss. I thought about it. When I was looking around his apartment. Which was frigging huge.

TOM. Maybe. Ah. Can I.

ED. I think it's stopped raining.

TOM. Do you want something to drink?

(Pause.)

ED. Yeah look. It has. They're probably wondering where I am. I'm going to get going.

TOM. Don't take that. Take my shirt. It's dry.

ED. Sure? You want to trade?

TOM. Sure.

(Pause.)

ED. Ok. You keep mine. Thanks.

TOM. Ok.

ED. Ok. Bye. Thanks.

Ok.

(ED exits.)

TOM. You forgot your banner! Ed!

(ADELE enters.)

Ed forgot your banner. Yesterday. He forgot this. He around?

ADELE. No.

TOM. I wanted to give it back to him.

(OLIVIA enters.)

OLIVIA. You brought the banner. Just in time to help us to close up shop! Brick and pamphlets in the box. And now banner. Hup. All packed there we are. Done!
What a good day this was!

TOM. Is Ed around?

OLIVIA. He's supposed to pick us up with the van. Adele you have everything of yours?

ADELE. I do.

OLIVIA. I guess let's just wait then.

TOM. Is he coming soon?

OLIVIA. Who?

TOM. Ed.

OLIVIA. Oh yeah. I think so. He said he would.

TOM. So you're just going to wait?

OLIVIA. Over here.

TOM. Until he comes?

OLIVIA. Yup.

TOM. How'd you do all this?

OLIVIA. All what?

TOM. This. Church of the Fifth Day.

OLIVIA. That's quite a story. Right Adele?

ADELE. Sure is.

OLIVIA. That's right it is.

(Long pause.)

TOM. Really?

OLIVIA. Yup.

(Pause.)

TOM. So? How did you?

OLIVIA. What?

TOM. Do it?

OLIVIA. Ok.

One day, when I was practicing preaching, outside, it rained. And I thought "We're gonna need a church. With a roof." And a miracle happened. Because that very day, Adele said to me—

ADELE. My father is dead.

(Long pause.)

OLIVIA. Now.

In order to understand why I knew this was a miracle, we have to go back in time.

Imagine:

Two years ago, on the fifth day of my semi-annual fast, which also happened to be on Cinco de Mayo, the fifth of May, which is the fifth month of the year, I was wandering through the basement stacks of the Rochambeau library. Just

I was lightheaded. Well because I was fasting. I was lightheaded. I was discouraged. I had a low-paying job. My car was. My Visa bill was. I felt.

I was in the basement of a library.

So there I was. In the basement. Just reading. Here and there. And I opened a journal. With an article. About a medieval aviary. Not a building aviary. But a book aviary. A medieval book. Written by monks. Which explained everything. In the form of stories about birds.

The vulture devours corpses like a sinner delights in carnal knowledge. And. The sparrow is an inconstant and restless bird. Like a faithless man flying from God. And

ADELE. The red feet of the dove is the blood of martyrs.

OLIVIA. Right. And. Suddenly a flashing insight cut through my lightheadedness and despair.

I realized the bird is God revealing all. On the fifth day of the fifth month of my fortieth year and forty is five times five plus five and five and five, I realized that the fifth day of creation is really the holiest of holy days. Not the sixth, not the seventh, but the fifth. The day God created birds.

And I felt a deep calm. I had a message to share.

I went to work. With the number five and flocks of birds flying around in my head. I went to my low-paying job but so what I don't care. I was working at the paint department at Adler's. So what.

That was the day I met Adele.

ADELE. I needed paint.

OLIVIA. She needed peacock-blue paint.

ADELE. That's right.

OLIVIA. Whoever needs peacock-blue paint? No one. She comes in for peacock-blue paint. I got quiet.

ADELE. I was painting.

OLIVIA. Her father's aviary.

TOM. You were painting a book?

OLIVIA. Not a book aviary. His aviary aviary. It's a birdhouse. Only house-sized.

TOM. Oh.

OLIVIA. She said aviary. I got really quiet.

ADELE. On Church Road.

OLIVIA. Church Road! She said that. AWK! I fainted.

ADELE. She did.

TOM. You did?

OLIVIA. I did.

ADELE. She fainted!

OLIVIA. Made that sound. AWK!

ADELE. She did!

OLIVIA. And fainted!

ADELE. She did!

OLIVIA. This dramatic response naturally enchanted Adele

ADELE. It did!

OLIVIA. She returned the next day with coffee

ADELE. With two cups.

OLIVIA. And an order for more paint.

ADELE. Eggshell white.

OLIVIA. AWK! I fainted again.

ADELE. Ha!

OLIVIA. Of course we became friends. We went out. For coffee. I was always talking about the Fifth Day. Adele was studying electrical something at
Where was that?

ADELE. Wampanoag Polytech.

OLIVIA. She's not a great electrician.

ADELE. No.

TOM. No?

OLIVIA. No.

ADELE. No.

OLIVIA. With her, when something is supposed to hum, it often zaps.

ADELE. Ha.

OLIVIA. And when it's supposed to zap, there can be smoke.

TOM. Really.

ADELE. Um.

OLIVIA. But. She is a great listener.

ADELE. Olivia.

OLIVIA. You are.

ADELE. Ok.

OLIVIA. She is. Not a good listener. More than good. Listening is a rare and difficult art. It takes stamina and generosity and a quick and responsive mind.

ADELE. Olivia.

OLIVIA. Adele is the Stradivarius of listeners, an ox, a silent Rock of Gibraltar, with a crystal ear as they say.

TOM. Really.

OLIVIA. Her? She's been listening her whole life. You can tell. She's been listening to everything. Every day. To her mother. To gossip. In church. To drunks. To liars. To the radio. She doesn't care who she listens to. And she's heard a lot.

ADELE. If you listen, people will talk.

OLIVIA. So one day, when I finally really understood my theory of the soul, on that day when I told Adele

ADELE. The soul is a bird we keep in our heart.

OLIVIA. She burst into tears.

(Long pause.)

Now.

In order to understand why, we have to go farther back. To Adele's childhood. Adele's mother died when she was

ADELE. eleven

OLIVIA. eleven. Right. Her father was

ADELE. inconsolable

OLIVIA. Right. He was

ADELE. inconsolable

OLIVIA. Right. He

ADELE. was

(Long pause.)

When um

When my mother died my father was inconsolable.

He was

He sat us in the living room on the couch. Me. Bobby. Ed. He couldn't. Look us in the eye. He couldn't stop. He walked around the house. In his socks. Room to room. Looking everywhere. For her.

The day of the funeral, we pulled up in front of the church, my father got out of the car, came around to open the car door for us, we got out, me, Bobby, Ed, he took me and Ed by the hand, we walked up the walkway to the church, Bobby was behind us, when suddenly

(ADELE blows a breath.)

the lightest flapping, a little little small small brown bird, a little small wren-like bird, maybe a wren, my guess I guess is a wren, landed on my father's hand, on his hand, my father looked into the wren's eyes, and he whispered—"this bird is my wife's soul," because I was listening I heard "this bird is my wife's soul"

(ADELE breathes in.)

We sat in the front row pew during the funeral, me, Bobby, Ed, my father, crying, all of us in tears except my father, he was smiling, during the sermon the minister lost his place because he noticed the

wren, flapping against the cloth of my father's suit jacket pocket, my father was smiling and patting it, we went straight home, we barely talked to anyone, my aunt had to talk to everyone in the line waiting with consolations because my father just walked us right by them, me, Bobby, Ed, my father got us home, into the kitchen and he put the bird under a soup pot.

(Pause.)

Then he ran upstairs to Bobby's room, dumped Bobby's records, dumped them, dumped them right out of his Georgia Peach record crate, right out onto the floor, brought the crate down into the kitchen, turned the crate over, got the bird out from under the soup pot and put it under the crate, he looked outside, into the backyard, at the doghouse, pulled the dog out into the front yard, tied the dog to the lilac bush, lifted up the doghouse, carried it into the kitchen, made a screen door for it, scratched "Mom" on it, put the bird in it. The bird went from pocket to soup pot to record crate to doghouse. The bird looked through the screen door at my father. My father looked back at the bird. The bird looked. My father looked. We watched. Me. Bobby. Ed. For a long time.

"That's not going to work," my father said.

He took Ed and sat him next to him at the kitchen table. "Ed, I'm going to build Mom a house but until then, she's going to stay in your room."

Ed said that startled him because he had a thought he thought Oh great How am I going to sleep with Mom flying around and then he had another thought he thought Oh great I'm gonna have to put on my underwear in the morning with Mom tilting her head and looking at me and she's got little new beady black eyes.

"We're going to put you in Bobby's room on the cot," my father said. "That's not fair!" That was Bobby yelling—"He's just a kid and that bird isn't Mom anyway that's just a dumb bird" my father slapped Bobby hard. Across his face. I ran and stood on the stairs. My father looked at me and I didn't cry.

So now my Mom is in Ed's room and Ed was in Bobby's room, where Bobby'd only let him have as much stuff as he could stuff under the cot. Everything else anything that stuck out went out the window. Then Ed would have to run down the stairs out into the garden to get it before it got soaked by the sprinkler. And then he'd

have to sneak it back into his room and put it back where it had been in the first place. My Mom made him nervous, 'cause the curtains were shut and the light was dim and he said she had a habit of flying low. So after a while Ed would make me come with him into his room with him where we'd sit in the dim light, me visiting Mom and Ed visiting his stuff. I'd sit on the edge of Ed's desk chair, remembering to sit up straight because this was my mother after all and my mother was very concerned about good posture. Sometimes I sat and I talked to her and sometimes I sat and I didn't have anything to say to her, and she'd hop and hop, hop hop hop hop, around the room, ending up under the bureau, and sometimes she looked so disinterested in what I was saying that I'd think, maybe Dad made a mistake, maybe this isn't Mom, but maybe it is just a bird, just a dumb bird like Bobby muttered every night, "just a dumb bird and Dad is even dumber than the bird thinking the dumb bird is Mom."

(Long pause.)

My father built the aviary, I helped.

(Long pause.)

It was a long job that took a very long time because my father wanted it just right. I helped him do most of the wiring which was where I first got interested in electrical appliances, an interest which is still with me today.

ZAP

My father was very patient.

We built it on an empty lot my father and mother had bought for their vacation/retirement home-to-be. "So she retired a little early" my father would say. Sometimes he'd look upset and say "I should have built this for her years ago, I shouldn't of made her wait" and he'd cry. But mostly he was pretty happy hammering.

When we finished, we brought my Mom there. I was happy to see her there because she seemed happy. And Ed was happy she was out of his room and Bobby was happy Ed was out of his room and so all in all it seemed like everyone was pretty happy.

Then my father came up with the thought that it would be a good idea to collect the souls of various other dead people from the area who were just flapping around any which way anywhere. It wasn't

odd to see me and my father walking around the woods or down near the river, he'd found this big swimming pool net and I'd see one "there there Dad there get her get her get her" and woosh he would, get her, and I'd say "Good catch Dad" and we'd bring Mrs. Fontaine or Mr. Leary or whoever it was flapping in the net and put'm into the aviary with Mom. My father would sit in there. Sometimes the squawking was loud but he really he didn't seem to mind.

Every now and then one of the other birds would die. Which was confusing. But my father would just smile and talk about the will of God. And that's how it went for a very long time.

But then one day the wren died. Which was very. Confusing.

(Very long pause.)

After that my father got pale. A bunch of windowpanes got broken one night. The other birds either flew away or died. Most of the plants dried up. Or were cut down.

My father just sat in there. I'd try and spruce it up every now and then but he wasn't really interested. That was. For a whole bunch of years. Up until just. And then of course

(Pause.)

Then. My father

(Pause.)

So.

(Pause.)

So back when

(Pause.)

Back when Olivia said

(Long pause.)

(OLIVIA looks at ADELE.)

(Long pause.)

OLIVIA. The soul is a bird we keep in our heart.

ADELE. I remembered

OLIVIA. *(Pause. She looks at ADELE:)* Her father saying “This bird is my wife’s soul” and she knew I understood.

ADELE. Right.

OLIVIA. And this is why when I said “We need a church. With a roof.” and Adele said “My father is dead” I knew a miracle had occurred. Because as sad as Adele is and as sad as I am for Adele, in a quiet backroom of my mind I think

Peacock-blue paint and the basement of a library and Adele’s mother and a tiny wren and five and five and five and five fives it all adds up.

The aviary is going to be our Church of the Fifth Day! The time is here.

I had asked and I had received.

ED. *(Enters:)* ’Course you haven’t got it yet.

ADELE. Ed!

OLIVIA. Hi Ed.

ED. Because Bobby might have something to say about it.

OLIVIA. True.

ED. Jane might have something to say.

OLIVIA. True.

ED. I might have something to say.

OLIVIA. True.

TOM. Hi Ed.

ED. This everything?

ADELE. Yup.

ED. Ok. Let’s get out of here. Shall we?

OLIVIA. Let’s go.

ADELE. Ok. See ya Tom.

TOM. Ok.

(ED, ADELE and OLIVIA exit.)

(ADELE reenters to get the banner.)

He forgot it again.

ADELE. Thanks.

(She exits with the banner.)

TOM. 'Course I went back the next day.

(He sits. ADELE enters. She carries pamphlets. She sits. They sit waiting.)

(Long pause.)

ADELE. I get tired. A bit. Of handing out pamphlets.

TOM. It's hard work.

ADELE. It's more the people staring at me.

TOM. It's hard to get used to people staring.

ADELE. They read them. Then they stare at me.

(Long pause.)

Olivia writes them.

TOM. She does a good job.

ADELE. She does.

(Pause.)

I don't really understand them.

TOM. They are hard to understand.

ADELE. Do you believe her?

TOM. I have a bird.

ADELE. I don't. Have a bird. But she understands why not. You know. Because of my Mom.

TOM. Right.

ADELE. I believe her.

TOM. You do.

ADELE. Because she believes. That's enough for me.

(JANE enters.)

Hey Jane!

JANE. Is that Olivia? Who are all those people around her?

ADELE. They came to listen to her.

JANE. She gives speeches out here in the park?

ADELE. Loads of people're showing up every day.

JANE. I want to talk to you and Ed about this aviary mess. Is Ed here?

TOM. Not yet.

JANE. I'm Jane.

ADELE. Oh yeah sorry this is Tom.

JANE. Hello Tom.

TOM. You're Ed's sister-in-law.

JANE. And Adele's.

TOM. Well hey then Jane.

JANE. Ok.

Is Ed coming by because we really have things to discuss. About the aviary. I finally had a chance to really talk to Bobby about it. We were at the ballet last night. I talked to him about the possibility

TOM. You went to the ballet?

JANE. Yes.

TOM. I love the ballet. I mean. The ballet.

JANE. Have you seen this one?

TOM. Of course. Oh yeah of course. I'll go and see it a couple of times. I love the ballet. Man I. I'm a hockey player you know so I love it, it's the same in a way, the movement, it's the same, I mean

you take Russian nineteenth century ballet, it's just like a hockey game, it's got five acts, Russian ballet—five acts, act one, narrative it's the story told from beginning to end, act two's a vision, act three is mad scenes, act four the conclusion, act five, a little dance. Now hockey—the game is like the first act of the ballet when the story is told, it's the narrative, the hockey game itself. Then the second act, that's the moment of when it's over, in your mind's eye there's that moment, that critical goal, that incredible, amazing save, or the penalty, that something that was the defining moment that brought us here, it's like act two in the ballet, that moment is a vision. Act three, we won euphoria, or act three, we lost despair, madness, act four, the interviews, the commentary, the coaches' recap, it's all over it's all wrapped up this is what happened this and this and then act five I have to go dance because I'm so fired up I couldn't go to bed. I gotta go dance. I gotta keep moving. I love the ballet.

JANE. You're a hockey player?

TOM. Oh. Yeah. Yeah. I am.

JANE. Professional?

TOM. Well. Yeah.

JANE. Do you play for us?

TOM. I do.

JANE. My husband Bobby would die to meet you. I would love you to meet Bobby. He hates the ballet. He loves hockey. I can't wait to tell him you love the ballet.

ED. (*Enters:*) So Olivia's over there talking to three of her new you know disciples you know Adele the one the sack of flour with the droopy eyes

ADELE. Martie

ED. Hey Jane hey Tom

TOM. Hi Ed

ED. Hi yeah Martie so Olivia's talking to Martie and Martie was in the park the day all the birds came flying down and covered Olivia

And Ron's there

He changed his last name to Dove because it rhymes with love and Dolores

So Olivia and Martie and Ron Dove rhymes with love are all trying to talk Dolores off the emotional ledge because Dolores used to be a sous chef at this restaurant and she served duck all the time.

Duck à la orange. Duck tartar. Turducken!

She ate the redemption, she keeps saying that. "I ate the redemption I ate the redemption."

I know Adele. It's not funny. It's a little funny. I know. It's not funny.

How's everyone doing?

ADELE. You shouldn't make fun.

ED. No I know I know. I know.

ADELE. They all look up to Olivia.

ED. Absolutely. Hey Jane.

JANE. Ed we need to talk about the aviary and what we're going to do.

ED. Yeah. Ok sure.

JANE. Will you excuse us Tom?

ED. He can stay.

JANE. It's personal Ed.

TOM. Oh sure. Of course.

ED. What's the big deal?

JANE. It's nothing personal Tom. But.

TOM. No.

JANE. It was nice meeting you.

TOM. I'll just. See you later. Adele. Ed.

ED. Ok.

ADELE. Bye Tom.

(TOM *exits.*)

JANE. Ed. It's personal. I mean

ED. Yeah ok ok so

ADELE. He's a hockey player.

ED. Who is?

ADELE. Tom.

ED. He is?

ADELE. Yeah.

ED. Professional?

ADELE. Yeah.

ED. Really.

ADELE. Yeah.

JANE. Ed. The aviary.

ED. Does he play for us?

ADELE. Yeah.

ED. Really.

JANE. Adele.

ED. Huh.

JANE. Augh!

ED. What.

ADELE. What Jane?

ED. So what do you think we should do with the aviary?

OLIVIA. (*Enters:*) Oh man oh man. They're driving me nuts those three. Jane. It's unbearable. The monotony. The aggravation. The pure tedium of a congregation. I never realized that just because I start my own church I have to have people in it.

JANE. That's kind of the point though isn't it.

OLIVIA. Of course but Well just because the church I'm starting might seem odd to some people, I am looking at you Jane, it doesn't seem fair that all its members should have to automatically be odd.

JANE. It seems odd to expect them not to be.

ADELE. Jane.

JANE. Well really Adele. It's a bird religion.

ADELE. So?

JANE. These are all bird people.

OLIVIA. She's right.

ADELE. She's not right.

OLIVIA. With Martie it's her mother, her father, her brother, that weird forklift exhaust pipe thing I don't even.

ADELE. Well.

OLIVIA. I don't What am I even supposed to say to that? Her brother. The forklift. The exhaust pipe. What am I supposed to say?

ADELE. Well.

OLIVIA. I don't even want to tell Ron where the study class is, in case he shows up.

ADELE. Well.

OLIVIA. And Dolores

ADELE. Yeah.

OLIVIA. She's daffy.

ADELE. Well.

OLIVIA. She is. I don't even.

ED. Tom's a hockey player.

ADELE. He's a hockey player.

OLIVIA. He is?

ED. Yeah.

OLIVIA. Professional?

ED. Yeah.

OLIVIA. Really. Does he play for us?

ADELE. Yeah.

OLIVIA. Really.

JANE. Oh good God.

ED. It's kind of interesting he didn't tell us, isn't it.

JANE. Tell us what?

ED. That he's a hockey player.

JANE. Ed.

ADELE. Yeah.

ED. And that he plays professional hockey.

ADELE. Yeah.

JANE. Ed.

ED. And.

ADELE. He plays for us.

ED. Yeah.

ADELE. I know.

ED. I just think he would have said something earlier.

ADELE. Most people would have.

ED. You should have seen his apartment.

ADELE. When'd you see his apartment?

ED. It was huge. There was this whopping huge statue of something in his hallway. Had to be this big. I thought he must be a lawyer. I never thought he was a professional hockey player.

JANE. Ed.

ED. I like that though. It was modest. Not to tell us.

JANE. He seems very nice.

ED. You make that sound bad.

JANE. I'm sure he's a very good hockey player.

ADELE. I like him.

ED. You do?

ADELE. Yes I do.

OLIVIA. I like him too.

ADELE. He has a bird.

OLIVIA. He's normal.

ED. He's a normal bird person.

OLIVIA. Which means it's possible.

ED. To be a normal bird person.

JANE. Bobby and I think we should sell it.

ADELE. Sell what?

JANE. The aviary.

ED. I thought Bobby doesn't care.

JANE. Bobby cares! Bobby cares! Bobby cares!

(Pause.)

I just have to say I'm not sure a banner and some pamphlets and a congregation with one normal hockey-playing bird person and the rest weird and faith in a half-baked bird/fantasy/miracle/birds-coming-down-and-covering-you thing constitutes a real church. Ed, Adele I'll call you.

(She exits.)

(Pause.)

OLIVIA. You know what'll make this a real church?

ED. Then Olivia had a terrifying idea.

OLIVIA. We'll have a bakesale. That'll show her who has a real church.

(OLIVIA, ADELE and ED exit.)

(TOM and ANDRE enter off the ice. They've just finished hockey practice. They are suited up and sweaty. During this scene they take off their skates and uniforms. In the middle of the scene they shower in fast motion, like a film speeded up. They dress into their street clothes.)

ANDRE. You know what I think? I think you should just kiss him.

TOM. I should just kiss him.

ANDRE. Yeah. Yeah absolutely. That's what I did with Jeanine. I just kissed her. 'Course we were both shit-faced and already fucking naked in bed. But she seemed to like it. She told me afterwards that it was the kiss that did it.

TOM. Yeah?

ANDRE. Yeah absolutely. 'Course I'm Lithuanian.

TOM. So?

ANDRE. You know Lithuanians.

TOM. They're from Lithuania.

ANDRE. We know how to kiss.

TOM. That's what Jeanine says.

ANDRE. That's right. So I can't be making any promises for you.

TOM. Yeah. Like you could do it and I couldn't.

ANDRE. That's funny I don't see your guy up in the wives' box. I see Jeanine. I don't see this Ed guy.

TOM. Yeah ok.

ANDRE. That's funny I see Jeanine, she's got a wedding ring on her finger that she's still showing everyone. I don't see this Ed guy, not with any no even friendship ring or I'm-your-boyfriend ring he's waving around.

TOM. You're right.

ANDRE. He has no ring.

TOM. No he doesn't.

ANDRE. Fact, I don't even see this Ed guy. He's probably at some other hockey game. Someone else's probably been kissing him.

TOM. Oh that's what you think huh.

ANDRE. That's funny I see Jeanine she's got a belly out to here, makes it hard for her to sit through the whole game without peeing every five minutes. Someone's been kissing her.

TOM. That's right. I wonder who?

ANDRE. That's not funny.

TOM. That's not funny?

ANDRE. No.

TOM. Ok ok.

ANDRE. You're talking about my wife.

TOM. Ok ok you're right.

ANDRE. My wife who's pregnant with my kid.

TOM. I was joking.

ANDRE. That's not funny. 'Cause she would kick your ass! Hah! She'd come running down the stands swinging at you, she heard you making fun of me. Hah! I don't see Ed standing anywhere near here ready to take a swing at her for you! Hah!

TOM. Ok ok.

ANDRE. What are you scared of?

TOM. What?

ANDRE. What are you scared of?

TOM. Nothing.

ANDRE. With this Ed guy.

TOM. Nothing.

ANDRE. What?

TOM. With other guys I'm not. But with him. I don't know how to talk to him. I start. I want to start and say something. I. It. I don't know the right. I've never known how to. And.

ANDRE. You afraid he's not going to like you?

TOM. *(Pause.)*

ANDRE. If he doesn't like you he's a dope.

TOM. He's not a dope.

ANDRE. Hey all I'm saying.

TOM. I'm the dope There's nothing stupider than being in love.

ANDRE. What?

TOM. It makes me think too much. I can't speak because I can't speak fast enough to keep up with my mind. I think about him, then I think about how I can never know what he's thinking about me, does he think about me? what if he doesn't think about me? then I think Don't think! because I think—I don't want to think that. So I just stand there and look at him. Then I think he must think I'm a freak.

(Pause.)

ANDRE. Oh boy.

TOM. I gave him an orange the other day. He shared it with everyone. He gave a piece to just anyone.

(Pause.)

ANDRE. What are you doing tonight?

TOM. Want to go to a bakesale?

ANDRE. A bakesale?

TOM. Yeah.

ANDRE. With rice crispy treats and shit?

TOM. Yeah.

ANDRE. Fuck yeah. I'm totally in. I just gotta call Jeanine at home let her know. Lemme call her lemme call her. *(Takes out his cell phone.)* Baby Hey baby. How's it going?

(Long pause.)

Hey baby, was there a guy named Ed up in the wives' booth at the last game?

TOM. Oh funny guy.

ANDRE. She says she doesn't know any Ed guy.

So baby Tom invited me out. Tonight. To a bakesale. I know! You ok with that?

(Pause.)

Hey Tom, where's it at?

TOM. Tell her church.

ANDRE. Yeah.

TOM. No really.

ANDRE. Ok. *(To Jeanine:)* He says church. Yeah. Yeah!

(Pause.)

What? Nah Tom wouldn't shit you. *(To TOM:)* She thinks you're shitting her! *(To Jeanine:)* Yeah me too. You know that I do.

(Pause.)

I won't be too long. Ok.

(Hangs up.)

(Pause.)

I love that fucking woman.

TOM. You should.

ANDRE. I do.

TOM. She's a hot shit.

ANDRE. I know.

(Pause.)

I was down near the bus station today.

TOM. Yeah?

ANDRE. So I saw this little kid, little you know, maybe three maybe four. With his mom and his grandma, they're all waiting for the bus, this little kid's looking up into the sky, his chin's up like this, he's screaming his head off in Spanish he's yelling and laughing yelling more and laughing, his mom and his grandma are laughing and smiling at the rest of us, I'm thinking How come they're not telling him to shut up and be polite you know because he is screaming. A lot. And loud. So I look at the mother, she smiles at me and looks a little embarrassed because she should be, but she says to me, we can't stop him because he's praying. He's shouting up to God.

The kid's a total fucking hot shit. He knows already that as long as he's shouting up to God, he can be as noisy as he wants. There's his grandma laughing at him screaming! Hey God hey God hey God hey God in Spanish!

I was laughing and I got upset.

TOM. You got upset?

ANDRE. Yeah.

TOM. Why?

ANDRE. I got upset because my kid he's going to be a hot shit like that little kid. I know it.

TOM. You bet he is.

ANDRE. I got upset because what if I'm not good enough to him?

(Pause.)

TOM. You will be.

ANDRE. You know?

(Pause.)

Are we going or what?

TOM. Yeah let's go.

(They exit.)

(ED enters. He has a rice crispy square. He has just come out of the bakesale.)

ED. There is something truly disturbing about a bakesale.

(TOM and ANDRE enter.)

TOM. Hey Ed.

ED. Hey.

TOM. This is my friend Andre. This is Ed

ANDRE. Oh. Ed. Is that a rice crispy treat?

ED. It is.

ANDRE. I am headed into heaven. *(To TOM:)* You coming?

TOM. You going back in?

ED. Naw. It's a little crazy in there.

TOM. I'm going to wait outside for a bit.

ANDRE. I'm going to get me a nice rice crispy treat. I'm going to get me a whole plate of'm. Made by a nice little old church lady from your church.

(Exits.)

ED. He doesn't know what he's getting himself into.

TOM. No.

ED. It's kind of weird in there.

TOM. Yeah?

ED. It's a bakesale with a bird theme. A bakesale on its own is kinda. Add cookies shaped like pelicans. And. Ostriches. And.

(Shows cookie shaped like a bird.)

TOM. Yeah.

(Long pause.)

ED. Add Olivia.

TOM. She's ok.

ED. No yeah ok. She is.

(Pause.)

She's actually kinda

(Shakes hand.)

TOM. Nice night.

ED. Yeah.

(Pause.)

TOM. *(Pause.)*

ED. She wants to use my Dad's aviary as the foundation of her church.

My sister Adele is all for it. My sister-in-law Jane is adamantly against it. My brother Bobby doesn't care.

TOM. What do you want to do with it?

ED. What?

TOM. What do you want to do with it?

ED. What do you mean?

TOM. Do you want to give it to her?

ED. No. No.

No. I want it to crumble down back into the ground. I'm tired of the thing.

(Pause.)

It was my Dad's.

TOM. That's what Adele said.

ED. Yeah. She and him.

They were very close. And. He was a good guy. He was a really. But. I just didn't really. I wasn't invited. In, with them.

(Pause.)

What do you think we should do with it?

TOM. Oh.

(Pause.)

ANDRE. *(Enters:)* Did you kiss him?

TOM. No.

ANDRE. Oh.

(Exits back into bakesale.)

TOM. I want to take you to the ballet.

ED. You what?

TOM. I'd like to take you out.

ED. To the ballet.

TOM. Yeah.

ED. Like on a date?

TOM. Maybe you and your sister.

ED. Oh. Me and Adele.

TOM. And Andre. He'd probably want to go too.

ED. You want to take all of us. To the ballet.

TOM. *(Long pause.)*

ED. Sounds fun. All of us. Going together. To the ballet.

(TOM kisses him.)

(They kiss.)

(And kiss. And kiss.)

(And kiss.)

(And kiss.)

(And lean back.)

ED. Huh.

(They kiss. And kiss.)

The ballet'd be fun.

(TOM kisses him.)

(ANDRE and ADELE enter.)

ANDRE. Shit Tom you heard this woman Olivia?

TOM. Yeah.

ANDRE. She's unbelievable! That bird thing that happened?

TOM. Yeah.

ANDRE. That's fucking unbelievable. They should be telling the goddamn Pope.

TOM. Yeah.

ANDRE. A whole bunch of people in there saw it! She saw it! Didn't you Adele!

ADELE. I did!

ANDRE. Olivia gave me this thing to read every morning. If I read it I'm going to be scoring better! All these birds came fucking What? What? What.

TOM. Nothing. What?

ANDRE. You ready to go?

TOM. Are you?

ANDRE. You want to go? Ok.

TOM. I didn't say I wanted to go but if you want to.

ANDRE. Yeah we can go if you want to.

TOM. Oh yeah ok. I guess we can. Go. Ok.

ANDRE. Ok then.

TOM. Now?

ANDRE. Want to go now? Ok.

TOM. If that's what you want.

ANDRE. Ok.

TOM. Ok then.

ANDRE. Ok.

TOM. I'll call you about the ballet.

ANDRE. You going to call him about the ballet?

TOM. Yeah.

ANDRE. Ok.

TOM. Yeah.

ANDRE. Ok then.

TOM. Let's go Andre.

ANDRE. The ballet!

ED. You're coming too.

ANDRE. I am?

ED. That's what Tom says.

ANDRE. The three of us're going to the ballet!

TOM. Let's go Andre.

ANDRE. We should take Adele too then!

ED. Oh she's coming.

ANDRE. She is!

ADELE. I am?

ANDRE. Everybody's going!

TOM. Andre.

ANDRE. That'll do it!

TOM. Andre.

ANDRE. Good job.

ED. See ya Tom.

(TOM and ANDRE exit.)

What?

(Pause.)

(TOM re-enters and kisses ED. Kisses ED again. Exits.)

What?

ADELE. Nothing.

(Exits.)

ED. Jane has a thing or two to say about the aviary.

JANE. *(Enters:)* One. It's a hazard.

Two. It's an eyesore.

(Exits.)

ED. Olivia has her own opinion.

OLIVIA. *(Enters:)* Some people think affairs of this material world are more important than affairs of the spirit. Some people are very deluded.

(Exits.)

ED. Jane has a thing or two to say about Olivia.

JANE. *(Enters:)* One. Someone might think that just because another certain someone in my family, ok Adele, just because this other second certain someone is easily led, that this first someone can get whatever she wants.

Two. And the first someone might think that no one else in my family is watching and no one else knows what is going on.

(Pause.)

Three, that first someone is very mistaken.

(Exits.)

ED. Olivia whispered in my ear:

OLIVIA. (*Enters:*) Who will remember your mother after the aviary is gone? Who will remember your father?

ED. Jane is stubborn.

JANE. (*Enters:*) It's an eyesore! It's a heap of dirty wood! He used to sit in the middle of it hunched over and crying. Why would you want to remember your father like that?

OLIVIA. It would be a celebration of their lives.

JANE. Someone might want to check her ambition at the door.

OLIVIA. Someone else might want to think about whether she is being blinded by greed

JANE. Ok that's enough.

ED. This is Olivia. She's my sister Adele's best friend.
And this. This is my brother Bobby's wife. Jane. The shoes.
They're fighting.

(ED exits.)

JANE. This is not about greed.

OLIVIA. I don't know Jane.

JANE. This is about how we should use an aviary and a parcel of land that was left to my husband and his sister and his brother by their father.

OLIVIA. Adele and Ed both agree that the church is a good idea.

JANE. They don't both agree about that.

OLIVIA. They do.

JANE. I've talked to Ed. He hasn't agreed to anything.

OLIVIA. He was there when I called them. When the birds came down.

JANE. And?

OLIVIA. I was inside that whirlwind of feathers and wings.

JANE. And so?

OLIVIA. I heard the voice of God Jane.

JANE. You did.

OLIVIA. Ed was there when I heard Him.

JANE. You heard a voice.

OLIVIA. It was His voice.

JANE. You think it was God's voice.

OLIVIA. Oh it was.

JANE. Fine. How about this. I don't care about your spiritual experience.

OLIVIA. Oh.

JANE. Period.

It has no meaning for me. Birds flapping down around you, the voice of God calling you. It doesn't. I don't. That's not how I.

OLIVIA. Jane. How can I convince you? If you won't

JANE. Maybe you can't convince me.

OLIVIA. I can't accept that.

JANE. There's your problem.

OLIVIA. I can't

JANE. There are people who won't be convinced.

OLIVIA. Those people

JANE. Some won't be.

OLIVIA. That's what prayer's for.

JANE. Do you hear how rude how pushy that is?

OLIVIA. What?

JANE. We're going to just pray right through your disinterest.

OLIVIA. All I want Jane all I pray for is for you to have

JANE. For you to use it, this spiritual experience, this whatever, for you to use it as the basis of an argument to get me to grant you moral. Anything. So that you can get what you want, even if you think it's what's supposed to. Doesn't resonate with me. That. Doesn't. No.

OLIVIA. I'm sorry to hear that.

JANE. Olivia.

OLIVIA. It's a shame.

JANE. What's a shame?

OLIVIA. It's discouraging. When people can't see. When it's right there boom in front of us.

JANE. Don't.

OLIVIA. Don't what?

JANE. Don't.

OLIVIA. I'm sorry you

JANE. I won't let you choose my God for me Olivia.

OLIVIA. Jane.

JANE. No matter how strongly you believe your God is the God. The only God the God the God.

OLIVIA. It makes me sad

JANE. I see my God every day.

OLIVIA. Then you have to understand.

JANE. The one you heard, the one you're talking about right now

OLIVIA. God.

JANE. No. Not God. Not. God. Your God. Your. God. There's a difference.

OLIVIA. You're being very picky. Jane.

JANE. My God? My God. I see my God in the order that we can sometimes. Sometimes see. In the world. I see my God in the quiet

and unadorned cleanliness that we sometimes we rarely but we sometimes sometimes even if it's rarely we can achieve. In a hedge that has been clipped and trimmed well. For example. A hedge. That.

OLIVIA. A hedge.

JANE. That someone has cared for. That someone has taken the time to.

This splash of birds that you

You wanting to build and To cover over this green piece of land with a parking lot and garbage cans so your people can come and No.

OLIVIA. Jane. I did hear His voice. I did.

Jane. There're people gathering around me who can hear that truth from me. Adele. Adele can hear it. She believes me.

JANE. Adele used to follow her father around trying to catch people's souls in a big net.

OLIVIA. Jane. More important than

It's important no it's necessary for people to believe in something or when they believe in something it's important it's necessary for them to be allowed to live in that belief.

JANE. I can agree with that.

OLIVIA. Well there. I knew if you just listened.

JANE. However.

Olivia.

There is one thing I can't abide. And that's when someone thinks they've made a big discovery oh oh oh oh and suddenly I have to live in that belief with them. You and your birds? That. On my little plot of land, and it's mine and Bobby's too, I'm not having it.

OLIVIA. Jane.

JANE. Olivia.

(Exits.)

OLIVIA. *(Following her offstage:)* Jane.

(ED, TOM, ADELE and ANDRE enter. They are all four at the ballet. During this scene, they arrive and take their seats facing the audience—as if the audience is the stage where the ballet is happening. They sit, read their programs, look behind them to see who is there.)

TOM. We're over here. Excuse me. Pardon me.

ANDRE. These are good seats. You go next Ed.

ED. Sure?

ANDRE. Yeah yeah.

ED. Ok. Excuse me.

TOM. You ok? These ok?

ED. They're great.

ANDRE. I did that.

ADELE. You did?

ANDRE. Yup. I told him just to kiss him.

ADELE. And he did?

ANDRE. I said kiss him.

ADELE. And that's what got them together?

ANDRE. Yeah I said kiss him and he did. And now look.

ADELE. That was good advice.

ANDRE. It was, wasn't it. After you.

ADELE. Oh thank you.

ANDRE. Certainly.

ADELE. Excuse me.

ANDRE. Excuse me.

TOM. I hope you like this.

ED. This place is beautiful.

TOM. Isn't it?

ANDRE. Look. Look.

ADELE. What.

ANDRE. Look at that woman's hair.

ADELE. Where?

ANDRE. There. Don't look. Look. Don't laugh.

ADELE. Oh my gosh.

ANDRE. I used to have a neighbor. Named Merta.

ADELE. Ed look.

ED. What

ADELE. That woman.

ANDRE. Her hair! Don't look. Look!

TOM. Andre.

ANDRE. What?

TOM. Andre.

ANDRE. Did you look at it?

ED. Tom.

TOM. Andre.

ED. You gotta look at it.

TOM. Andre.

ANDRE. This place is amazing. What are we going to see?

(They all look at their programs.)

ED. I think her husband's hair's a toupee.

ADELE. Sh.

ANDRE. Her hair is tilting.

ED. His is going to flap up.

ANDRE. Hers is definitely going to go over.

ADELE. Ed.

TOM. Andre

ED. Sh. Andre.

ADELE. Ed!

ED. Adele!

ANDRE. Ok ok I'm sorry. I shouldn't even have started it.

(Pause.)

Sorry Tom.

ADELE. Sorry Tom.

ED. Sorry Tom.

(The orchestra warms up. There is the hush as the conductor arrives. They applaud. The ballet begins. We watch their eyes move in unison as they watch the ballet, their heads bobbing in time to the music and the dancing. We see the ballet by watching them watch it.)

(This should be choreographed.)

TOM. There is something so damn fucking Oh my God about falling in love.

(The ballet is over. ADELE and ANDRE exit.)

ED. Tom.

TOM. Yeah?

ED. That was beautiful.

TOM. Yeah.

ED. Tom?

TOM. Yeah?

ED. I'm not going to do this.

TOM. What?

ED. This.

TOM. What do you mean?

ED. I'm. I'm not going to

TOM. Ok.

(Pause.)

Why not?

ED. It's not you.

TOM. So. Why not?

ED. I was really in love. Before.

TOM. Uh huh.

ED. And it didn't work. And.

I'm really. I was really. I'm broken by it. I wanted it more than. And I didn't. So why would I want.

So you. Come and ask me. And.

And so I'm afraid

here it is offered to me again the chance that.

TOM. Well sure ok that makes

(Pause.)

I guess I'd be. But.

ED. So I think. What if love shows up again, hands in pockets, and what if it. What if it looks innocent. I don't want to take the chance. I don't want to. I don't want to. I don't want to.

TOM. Well don't you think

ED. Because you look innocent.

TOM. I'm not innocent. I mean.

ED. I don't want to.

TOM. Oh. Ok.

ED. I.

TOM. Shoot.

ED. I.

TOM. Oh um. You sure?

ED. Yeah.

TOM. Because, well because

ED. I don't want.

TOM. Ok sure sure sure. Sure.

Ok. That's too bad.

I. You're sure. That's too bad. That's.

(Exits.)

(New scene. ADELE Enters.)

ED. I told him. No.

ADELE. Oh.

ED. I told him I wasn't going to

ADELE. When did you tell him?

ED. Last night. After the ballet.

ADELE. He must have been sad. It seemed like he liked you a lot.

ED. What's wrong?

ADELE. Nothing. No. Nothing.

ED. What?

ADELE. Nothing.

That's too bad. I like Tom. I was hoping it was going to work.

ED. Well I'm just. I don't want to.

OLIVIA. *(Enters:)* Ron found a storefront in the city that will work perfectly for the Church. Andre's going to help me buy it. You can tell Jane we won't be needing the aviary.

ED. Ok.

OLIVIA. Ok. *(Picks up banner.)* Can I take this?

ED. *(Pause:)* Adele, can Olivia have the banner?

ADELE. Of course she can have it.

OLIVIA. Ok.
Well.

(OLIVIA exits.)

ADELE. I think we should let the aviary just be there until it goes. I don't want Olivia to have it. I don't want anyone to have it. I'm not doing anything with it anymore.

(Pause.)

And I don't want to be in her church anymore. I don't believe her.

ED. Ok.

(Pause.)

And that's what we let it do. We let it crumble to the ground.

(Pause.)

That's where our story ends. That's what happened.

(Long pause.)

Now.

In order to understand why it happened that way we have to go back in time in our story.

2. A Vision.

(OLIVIA enters. We see the moment when the birds came down and surrounded her, but this time from her perspective, without the birds, from inside. In slow motion. Loud flapping. She is terrified.)

(OLIVIA pulls down a shade/presentation tool with a diagram of a bird on it. She has a pointer. ADELE and ANDRE sit before her.)

OLIVIA. In the Church of the Fifth Day we take as our guide the bird.

(ANDRE raises his hand.)

Yes Andre?

ANDRE. Should I write this down?

OLIVIA. No it's in the
Look on the first page of the pamphlet. At the top. See "In the
Church of the Fifth Day we take as our guide the bird"?

ANDRE. Oh oh oh yeah ok Got it.

OLIVIA. In each of our hearts lives a bird called the soul. Man has
always tried to capture and to tame and to own this bird.

ANDRE. Huh. Did you know that?

ADELE. Kind of.

ANDRE. Huh. I didn't know that.
You excited about seeing the ballet tonight?

ADELE. Oh I am.

OLIVIA. Andre.

ANDRE. I'm listening. I'm listening.

OLIVIA. The nun imprisons the bird in a chaste marriage. The
rabbi tries to sing and to argue it to sleep. The Protestant builds it a
cage of stone and gold. The Buddhist winks and hopes—boink—the
bird won't be there anymore.

ANDRE. Huh. Did you know that?

ADELE. Um.

OLIVIA. We want to let the bird fly free. On the Fifth Day God cre-
ated the bird to be a constant reminder of his love. Not so we could
use it as target practice.

ANDRE. Olivia?

OLIVIA. Yes Andre?

ANDRE. Not even hunters?

OLIVIA. No.

ANDRE. Oh.
Not even hunters in the woods?

OLIVIA. No. No.

ANDRE. Oh.

Are chickens birds? I mean technically?

OLIVIA. Yes. Of course. Chickens are birds.

ANDRE. I mean they're not fowl? And so maybe exempt?

OLIVIA. Chickens are definitely birds.

ANDRE. Because I eat a lot of chicken. That's probably not.

OLIVIA. No.

ANDRE. Oh. Huh. See the thing is I really

(Pause.)

like chicken.

But.

OLIVIA. Andre. Don't worry about the whole chicken thing. It's confusing it confuses the

It's not whether or not you eat

I'm trying to teach you about a path of faith.

ANDRE. Huh.

OLIVIA. God created birds as a reminder to have faith.

ANDRE. Huh.

OLIVIA. When we see them it's a reminder.

ANDRE. From God.

OLIVIA. To have faith.

ANDRE. Huh.

OLIVIA. Faith works like this: We're lost.

ANDRE. Ok.

OLIVIA. Like?

ANDRE. We're not where we're supposed to be?

OLIVIA. Right!

ANDRE. We're late?

OLIVIA. Ok.

ANDRE. Something's smacked us in the head we've fallen down we don't know what the fuck's going on.

OLIVIA. We're lost.

ANDRE. Right.

OLIVIA. Now we can do one of two things. We can despair or we can have faith.

ANDRE. Huh.

OLIVIA. I'm telling you not to despair. I'm telling you to have faith.

ANDRE. Ok.

OLIVIA. I'm telling you to follow me as I continue to have faith.

ANDRE. Ok.

OLIVIA. I'm telling you that I was in despair and then suddenly I had a sense of relief a sense that God would relieve me of this despair if I would only let him
well
lead me.

And so I started listening and now I know I know I know that I'm going to be ok.

ANDRE. Really.

OLIVIA. Really.

ADELE. Really.

OLIVIA. Really.

ANDRE. I want that.

OLIVIA. *(Smiles.)*

ANDRE. That's what I want. I'd give up chicken for that.

OLIVIA. It was terrifying when the birds It is terrifying to see the Really to see to know that God exists. That He does love us. That love is all. It was terrifying. But it was also so

I had such a sense of
When I realized that there is help.

ANDRE. And you think he'll help me?

OLIVIA. God wants everybody. You love him, he'll help you.

ANDRE. Is that what you're doing?

ADELE. I'm trying.

ANDRE. Huh. Is it hard?

ADELE. I kind of think it's hard.

OLIVIA. But it's worth it.

ADELE. It is.

ANDRE. And you get all this from that bird.

OLIVIA. It's what the bird reminds me to remember.

ANDRE. I scored two goals last night.

OLIVIA. See? It's already working.

ANDRE. *(Pause:)* We should tell people.

OLIVIA. Yes we should.

(They exit.)

JANE. *(Enters. Points at bird picture:)* This is a pewee. A western wood pewee.

It's generally indistinguishable from an eastern wood pewee, except when you happen to hear its voice. And even then, when you hear a harsh, slightly descending *peer* or a clear whistling *pee-yeer* then it sounds just like the eastern pewee and it's still very hard to tell which one is which. But the western? In the early morning and at dusk it'll sing *tswee-tee-teet* mixed with *peer*. Sometimes it'll go *chip*. Then you know it's the western pewee. It never goes *pee-a-wee*. That would be the eastern pewee and that's not this bird here.

You can also tell it's not the eastern pewee because it doesn't have a black tip on its mandible.

I don't think we should shoot them either.

3. The Mad Scenes.

ED. My sister-in-law Jane can be quite determined.

JANE. It's a PEWEE!

ED. Let me stop this for a second.

(JANE stands still. ED talks to the audience.)

My sister-in-law Jane was a very particular child. She was extremely neat and precise. Things needed to be just so and often they weren't. There is a story of her sweeping the autumn leaves off the sidewalk back up on to the lawn and back under the various trees they had fallen out of. And another of a house that she walked by on her way to school, every day she stared the ground as she walked by it, because it had been painted a certain unsatisfying shade of yellow.

She's a scientist. Her dissertation and lifework have centered on the habits of the damselflies of New England. They're like dragonflies but smaller and less significant. American rubyspots and Ebony jewelwings, swamp spreadwings, skimming bluets. I've been at more than one unnerving dinner party where Jane has described the heart-shaped coupling of the male and female damselfly in rigorous, clinical detail.

I've wondered if her resistance to Olivia comes from the fact that birds eat damselflies.

JANE. All that aside Ed, it's still a PEWEE.

ED. Let me just continue this for a moment longer.

(JANE stands still. ED talks to the audience.)

My sister-in-law Jane lives her life according to the rules. The dishes should be done in the evening before going to bed. The word "fuck" should only be used very late at night with your husband while enjoying a good glass of scotch. Women who marry after forty should wear silver gray suits instead of wedding dresses. Lights on a Christmas tree should be white.

Olivia is chaotic.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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